

**2003- 2004
SAMPLE MEDIA RELEASE for
FREE and REDUCED-PRICE MEALS
in the
STATE MEAL PROGRAM**

This public release was/will be sent to (enter names of news media outlets and major employers contemplating layoffs):

on (insert date):

(Make appropriate changes as applicable to reflect the programs operated)

(Local school/sponsoring agency) today announced its policy for providing free and reduced-price meals to eligible children served under the State Meal Program. Each school and/or the central office have a copy of the policy, which may be reviewed by any interested party.

The household size and income criteria identified below will be used to determine eligibility for free and reduced-price meal benefits. Children from households whose income is at or below the levels shown are eligible for free or reduced-price meals. Children who receive Food Stamp, California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs), Kinship Guardianship Assistance Payments (KinGAP), or Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR) benefits are automatically eligible regardless of the income of the household in which they reside. Eligibility for a foster child is based on the child's "personal income."

	FREE ELIGIBILITY SCALE			REDUCED-PRICE ELIGIBILITY SCALE		
	Lunch, Breakfast, Milk			<i>Lunch, Breakfast</i>		
HOUSEHOLD SIZE	YEAR	MONTH	WEEK	YEAR	MONTH	WEEK
1	\$ 11,674	\$ 973	\$ 225	\$ 16,613	\$ 1,385	\$ 320
2	\$ 15,756	\$ 1,313	\$ 303	\$ 22,422	\$ 1,869	\$ 432
3	\$ 19,838	\$ 1,654	\$ 382	\$ 28,231	\$ 2,353	\$ 543
4	\$ 23,920	\$ 1,994	\$ 460	\$ 34,040	\$ 2,837	\$ 655
5	\$ 28,002	\$ 2,334	\$ 539	\$ 39,849	\$ 3,321	\$ 767
6	\$ 32,084	\$ 2,674	\$ 617	\$ 45,658	\$ 3,805	\$ 879
7	\$ 36,166	\$ 3,014	\$ 696	\$ 51,467	\$ 4,289	\$ 990
8	\$ 40,248	\$ 3,354	\$ 774	\$ 57,276	\$ 4,773	\$ 1,102
For each additional family member, add:						
	+ \$ 4,082	+ \$ 341	+ \$ 79	+ \$ 5,809	+ \$ 485	+ \$ 112

This is an equal opportunity program. If you believe you have been discriminated against because of race, color, ethnic/national origin, age, sex, or disability, you should immediately contact Eva Lopez-Contreras, Complaint and Civil Rights Coordinator, Nutrition Services Division, at (916) 445-5008, (800) 952-5609,

Sample Media Release for Free and Reduced-Price Meals

(continued)

Application forms are being distributed to all households with a letter informing them of the availability of free and reduced-price meals for their children. Applications are also available at the principal's office in each school. To apply for free or reduced-price meals, households must complete an application and return it to the school. Applications may be submitted at any time during the school year. The information households provide on the application will be used to determine meal eligibility and may be verified at any time during the school year by school or program officials.

Requirements for school officials to determine eligibility for free and reduced-price benefits are as follows: For households receiving Food Stamp, CalWORKs, KinGAP, or FDPIR benefits – applications need only include the enrolled child(ren)'s name, Food Stamp, CalWORKs, KinGAP, or FDPIR case number, and the signature of an adult household member. For households who do not list a Food Stamp, CalWORKs, KinGAP, or FDPIR case number, the application must include the names of all household members, the amount and source of the income received by each household member, and the signature and corresponding social security number of an adult household member; if the household member who signs the application does not have a social security number, the household member must indicate that a social security number is not available.

Under the provisions of the free and reduced-price meal policy, the determining official(s), as designated by the sponsor/agency, shall review applications and determine eligibility. Parents or guardians dissatisfied with the eligibility ruling may discuss the decision with the determining official on an informal basis. Parents may also make a formal request for an appeal hearing of the decision, and may do so orally or in writing with the sponsor/agency's hearing official. Parents or guardians should contact their child(ren)'s school(s) for specific information regarding the name of the determining official and/or hearing official for a specific school, agency, or district.

Households that list a Food Stamp, CalWORKs, KinGAP, or FDPIR case number must report when the household no longer receives these benefits. Households that are approved for benefits based on income must report increases in household income of over \$50 per month or \$600 per year and decreases in household size. Also, if a household member becomes unemployed or if the household size increases, the household should contact the school. Such changes may make the children of the household eligible for benefits if the household's income falls at or below the levels shown above.

Sponsors/Agencies that use direct certification should add the following paragraph to their public release:

Households that receive Food Stamp, CalWORKs, KinGAP, or FDPIR benefits may not have to complete an *Application for Free or Reduced-Price Meals or Free Milk*. School officials will determine eligibility for free meals based on documentation obtained directly from the Food Stamp, CalWORKs, KinGAP, or FDPIR office that a child is a member of a household currently receiving Food Stamp or FDPIR benefits or an assistance unit receiving CalWORKs or KinGAP benefits. School officials will notify households of their eligibility, but those who do not want their child(ren) to receive free meals must contact the school. Food Stamp, CalWORKs, KinGAP, and FDPIR households should complete an application if they are not notified of their eligibility by (insert date)_____.

Children who receive free or reduced-price meals shall be treated in the same manner as those who pay full price for meals.

